

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 03206 230731Z
ACTION EA-12

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USLO PEKING
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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 03206

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS : PINT, TW
SUBJECT : NOMINATION OF SUN YUN-HSUAN AS PREMIER

1. FOLLOWING HIS INAUGURATION ON MAY 20, 1978, PRESIDENT CHIANG CHING-KUO, IN HIS CAPACITY OF KMT CHAIRMAN, ANNOUNCED PARTY'S INTENTION TO NOMINATE FORMER MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SUN YUN-HSUAN TO BE PREMIER. IN HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAPACITY, CHIANG CHING-KUO SENT THE NOMINATION TO THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN ON MAY 22. FORMAL CONFIRMATION IS EXPECTED ON MAY 26.

2. SUN IS WELL KNOWN BY EMBASSY OFFICERS AS AN ABLE, AFFABLE AND HELPFUL CONTACT. HE HAS HELD A WIDE RANGE OF POSITIONS DEALING WITH ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. DURING HIS MOST RECENT TENURE AS MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, HIS RESPONSIBILITIES ENCOMPASSED WIDE RANGE ECONOMIC CONCERNS, INCLUDING COMMERCIAL, TRADE, INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL MATTERS. HE HAS GAINED A REPUTATION AS A TECHNOCRAT (IN THE BEST SENSE OF THE WORD) WHOSE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TAIPEI 03206 230731Z

INTERESTS AND ABILITIES, THOUGH IN NO WAY NARROWLY RESTRICTED, NONETHELESS DO NOT INCLUDE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS. SUN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. HAS ITS ROOTS EARLY IN HIS CAREER WHEN HE WAS ASSIGNED DURING WORLD WAR II TO WORK AND STUDY AT THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY. HE HAS RETAINED A STRONG ADMIRATION FOR THE U.S. AND HOLDS A CONVICTION THAT THE FUTURE OF

TAIWAN MUST BE LINKED WITH THE U.S. HE IS A STRONG PROPONENT OF MINIMUM GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC CONTROLS AND HE IS MORE OF AN ADVOCATE OF THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM THAN MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES.

3. WHAT ROLE HE WILL PLAY IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS NOT YET CLEAR. A CAUTIOUS AND CAREFUL ADMINISTRATOR, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT SUN TO ATTEMPT A RADICAL REORGANIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE YUAN. WHATEVER IMPRINT HE MAKES WILL PROBABLY BE ACHIEVED SLOWLY AND ONLY AFTER HIS WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT CHIANG, WHO WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE FOCUS OF POWER, IS ESTABLISHED. SUN WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE MOST ACTIVE IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS. WE EXPECT THE PRESIDENT TO RETAIN FULL CONTROL OVER MILITARY, POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

4. SUN IS ASSESSED BY THOSE WHO KNOW HIM WELL IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY AS A DECENT AND HONEST MAN DEDICATED TO THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC SERVICE. PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT, HE TOOK THE AMBASSADOR ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HE DID NOT WANT THE JOB, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT HIS WIFE IS NOT PLEASED THAT HE HAS TAKEN ON THIS NEW RESPONSIBILITY GIVEN HIS MEDICAL RECORD (HE SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK IN 1977). HE IS A FAMILY MAN AND IS DEVOTED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TAIPEI 03206 230731Z

TO HIS FOUR CHILDREN, AT LEAST TWO OF WHOM ARE NOW IN THE U.S., PRESUMABLY ON A PERMANENT BASIS. UNGER

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